

Patent Application for

**SOFTWARE-BASED NETWORK ATTACHED STORAGE SERVICES HOSTED ON
MASSIVELY DISTRIBUTED PARALLEL COMPUTING NETWORKS**

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This application is a continuation-in-part application of the following co-pending applications:

Application SN 09/538,543 entitled "DISTRIBUTED PARALLEL PROCESSING SYSTEM HAVING
CAPABILITY-BASED INCENTIVES AND ASSOCIATED METHOD," *which is now U.S. Patent 7003547*
Application SN 09/539,023
entitled "SWEEPSTAKES INCENTIVE MODEL AND ASSOCIATED SYSTEM," *which is now abandoned*
Application SN
09/539,448, entitled "CAPABILITY-BASED DISTRIBUTED PARALLEL PROCESING SYSTEM
AND ASSOCIATED METHOD," *which is now abandoned*
Application SN 09/539,428, entitled "METHOD OF MANAGING
DISTRIBUTED WORKLOADS AND ASSOCIATED SYSTEM," *which is now abandoned*
Application SN 09/539,106 entitled
"NETWORK SITE TESTING METHOD AND ASSOCIATED SYSTEM," *which is now U.S. Patent 6891802*
Application SN 09/538,542
entitled "NETWORK SITE CONTENT INDEXING METHOD AND ASSOCIATED SYSTEM," *which is now U.S. Patent 6654783*
and
Application SN 09/539,107 entitled "DISTRIBUTED BACK-UP SYSTEM AND ASSOCIATED
METHOD," *which is now abandoned*
each of which was filed on March 30, 2000, and each of which is hereby incorporated by
reference in its entirety.

This application is also a continuation-in-part application of the following co-pending
applications: Application SN 09/603,740 entitled "METHOD OF MANAGING WORKLOADS AND
ASSOCIATED DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING SYSTEM," *which is now abandoned*
Application SN 09/602,789 entitled
"MACHINE GENERATED SWEEPSTAKES ENTRY MODEL AND ASSOCIATED DISTRIBUTED
PROCESSING SYSTEM," *which is now U.S. Patent 7020678*
Application SN 09/602,803 entitled "DATA SHARING AND FILE
DISTRIBUTION METHOD AND ASSOCIATED DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING SYSTEM," *which is now U.S. Patent 7082474*
Application SN 09/602,844, entitled "DATA CONVERSION SERVICES AND ASSOCIATED
DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING SYSTEM," *which is now abandoned*
and Application SN 09/602,983 entitled "CUSTOMER
SERVICES AND ADVERTISING BASED UPON DEVICE ATTRIBUTES AND ASSOCIATED
DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING SYSTEM," *which is now U.S. Patent 6963817*
each of which was filed on June 23, 2000, and each of
which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

This application is also a continuation-in-part application of the following co-pending application: Application SN 09/648,832 entitled "SECURITY ARCHITECTURE FOR DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING SYSTEMS AND ASSOCIATED METHOD," which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. *which is now U.S. Patent 6847995*

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This application is also a continuation-in-part application of the following co-pending application: Application SN 09/794,969 entitled "SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR MONITIZING NETWORK CONNECTED USER BASES UTILIZING DISTRIBUTED PROCESSING SYSTEMS," which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. *which is now pending*

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Technical Field of the Invention

This invention relates to distributed processing and more particularly to techniques and related methods for managing, facilitating and implementing distributed processing in a network environment.

Background

The NAS (Network Attached Storage) market is currently one of the fastest growing segments of the overall storage market. NAS devices typically take the form of stand-alone devices or systems that contain their own storage, processing, connectivity and management resources. Through these internal capabilities, the NAS device becomes a storage resource that connects to any network enabling many devices on the network to share data via the NAS device.

A NAS device is a term that is often used to refer to a specialized file server that connects to the network to provide storage capacity to network-connected users. NAS devices typically contain a slimmed-down (micro-kernel) operating system and file system. NAS devices often process only input/output (I/O) requests by supporting popular file sharing protocols such as NFS (UNIX) and SMB (DOS/Windows). NAS devices also typically use traditional LAN protocols such as Ethernet and TCP/IP to communicate over the network. Some general-purpose computers using full-blown operating systems such as Windows or UNIX are often labeled as NAS products because they can provide storage that is attached to a network. However, a pure NAS device is one built from scratch as a dedicated file I/O device. As used herein, the term "NAS device" broadly refers to a device that makes data storage resources available to network-connected user devices. A "dedicated NAS device" is a device whose primary operational purpose is for providing NAS services.